



CIPA CONNECTION

December 2015

AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS, INC.

IN THIS ISSUE

The Season for Reflecting

December is such a busy time of the year in the legal community. No matter what field of law you are in, it seems like everything needs to be rushed and finished before the end of the year. In family law, clients want their battles to be over before the holidays. In civil practice, clients would like to see their settlement checks before the end of the year. Companies want to see their end of year audits completed, documents drafted, etc.

Individually, we are also busy getting ready for the holidays, making plans for travel, cooking, gift giving. It is also the time of the year for budgeting, organizing, making plans for the new year and for our organizational membership renewals.

Maybe at some time this year, you thought that you would love to be more involved with Central Illinois Paralegal Association, or would have liked to have attended more meetings, especially after you heard how great the last speaker was. Maybe you would have liked to have had some input in a decision that was made. Now is the time to indicate your interest in any of the several committees of CIPA. The time you give can be a little or a lot.

When I joined CIPA, I joined because I wanted to meet like-minded people in my profession. I was the only paralegal in the office where I worked and felt the need be around and to talk to other paralegals. At first, I did not belong to any committees. After being a member for a while, I felt that I wanted to do something. I wanted to help move this organization forward and reach out and speak to other paralegals, so I became involved by attending more meetings and eventually I ran for office as that opportunity availed itself.

I am so glad I joined CIPA and hope that you will join me in moving our organization forward by becoming involved in any way that you can. Thank you.

Denise Risinger
CIPA Secretary



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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 14, 2015 (Monday):

Be our guest for CIPA's annual Holiday Party at Tony Roma's in Bloomington, Illinois. Dinner is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. Adrian Barr, Managing Attorney from Prairie State Legal Services, will be swearing in the 2016 officers. **Must RSVP to cipa@ciparalegal.org no later than Dec. 10.**

Visit CIPA Online at www.ciparalegal.org.

An Overwhelming Response

Editorial by Debi Taylor, ACP

The Newsletter Committee received many responses to the article announcing that CIPA would be supporting the Northwestern University School of Law Center on Wrongful Convictions. Members were pleased with the conception of assisting in the plight to pursue justice for the wrongfully convicted. The Legal Clinic offers an opportunity to stay in touch with their recent developments. Go to <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/form/listserv> to subscribe. You may also go to <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/wrongfulconvictions/> to research the Center in general and read some wonderful stories of exoneration.

The National Registry of Exonerations, a project of the University of Michigan Law School and founded in conjunction with the Center, may also be found on the home page. On it, there are fascinating graphs and charts. It provides information on every known

exoneration since 1989. The Registry indicates that there are currently over 1,700 exonerations.

Personally, I did not know much about this area of the law until I heard Attorney Sara Sommervold and Exhoneree Kristine Bunch speak during the Annual Educational Seminar this year. Now, I can't get it off of my mind.

I am consumed with thinking about how many other wrongfully convicted people are languishing behind bars. Especially women. In 64% of female exonerees' cases, no crime has been committed (for example: accidental or natural deaths that are mistaken for homicides). 64% - that is astounding. I remember thinking when DNA was the-next-best-thing, however, in these cases, there is no DNA evidence. No crime. No DNA. You have already been convicted and are in prison. You are probably out of money. You

are probably running out of hope and feel powerless. You may or may not have family members who believe in you. The list is endless.

For all of the above reasons I am personally so thankful that Sara and Kristine crossed our paths. My eyes and my heart were opened. I hope that we, as a group, can assist them financially, morally, on a pro bono basis, on a friendship level, and most of all because pursuing justice is always the right thing to do.

SAVE THE DATE!

September 16, 2016 is the date to remember for the **27th Annual Legal Educational Seminar**, which will take place at the Double Tree Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington. If you are interested in joining the Seminar Committee, contact the committee Co-Chairs for more information:

Debi Taylor and Chris Thomas:
annual_seminar@ciparalegal.org

Executive Board Meeting Summary

by Denise Risinger

The 2016 Executive Board elect met on November 4, 2015, at Destihl in Normal.

In attendance: Chris Thomas, ACP, Celeste Poole, Debi Taylor, ACP, Denise Risinger, and Nichole Byers.

The **2016** meetings were set as follows:

January – Winter Vacation Month

February 8 – Bloomington – Tony Roma's

March 14 – Peoria – Midstate College

April 11 – Bloomington Social Event – TBD

May 9 – Bloomington – Tony Roma's

June 13 – Peoria – Midstate College

July – Summer Vacation Month

August 8 – Peoria Social Event – TBD

September 16 – Annual Legal Educational Seminar

October 10 – Annual Meeting and Election in Bloomington – Tony Roma's

November 14 – Peoria – Illinois Central College

December 12 – 2016 CIPA Holiday Meeting

President Elect, Chris Thomas, ACP, and NALA Liaison Elect, Debi Taylor, ACP, announced a possible partnership with the McLean County Bar Association. Information about the progress of this possibility is expected to be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

Membership renewal applications were approved for 2016.

Vice president-elect, Celeste Poole reported on the Scholarship Committee. This Committee will move forward in the same way that it successfully ran last year.

Treasurer-elect, Nichole Byers and Secretary-Elect, Denise Risinger announced that the Newsletter will go forward in 2016 with at least ten issues, rain or shine. Nichole and Denise are to co-chair the Newsletter committee and discussed the possible addition of a paralegal student section.

The executive board voted to pay the NALA membership dues of the 2016 NALA Liaison in lieu of sending said liaison to the NALA National Convention.

Regarding the December 14, 2015 Holiday Party, Debi Taylor, coordinated the Menu with Tony Roma's and designed the invitation to be emailed out. All was voted on and approved. President, Chris Thomas was to contact Adrian Barr at Prairie State Legal Services and request his services in swearing in the officers.

With regard to marketing, discussion was held regarding drafts of promotional brochures to be finished by the end of 2015. Also, discussion was held regarding the welcome of new members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

NOTE: January is CIPA's Winter Vacation Month. There is no member meeting scheduled for January.



CIPA Members Participate: Legal Help Clinic

by Chris Thomas, ACP

CIPA members Lisa Craghead, Ann Hill, ACP, Martha Ross, ACP, and Chris Thomas, ACP, participated in the Legal Advice Clinic held Saturday, November 7th at Mid Central Community Action. It was sponsored by Prairie State Legal Services, Mid Central Community Action, Public Interest Law Initiative, State Farm Bank, McLean County Bar Association and Eleventh Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee.

There were several attorneys and paralegals present. The event brought in 30 clients. Paralegals were paired with attorneys to meet with clients. The clients were first screened by Prairie State Legal Services and then met with an attorney/paralegal team.

The attorney interviewed the client to see what the legal issue was and then gave legal advice. The client was told that the attorney was there to give advice that day only; that they were not their attorney and would not be representing them in the future. If a client met the Prairie State Legal Services criteria to be represented, we were told in advance that Prairie State would follow-up with the client and we gave the client that information in the interview.

It was a very successful day. It was heartwarming to see so many attorneys and paralegals give up their personal time for four hours to meet with these clients who had nowhere else to turn.

\$20 WORD OF THE MONTH

Supererogatory

Going beyond the requirements of duty; greater than that required or needed; Superfluous (*Dictionary.com*).

Observed or performed to an extent not enjoined or required; Superfluous (Merriam-Webster.com).

The \$20 Word of the Month was suggested by Debi Taylor, ACP, a Paralegal at State Farm.

Note from Co-Editor Nichole Byers: This might qualify as a \$100 word, as it does not appear in Black's Law Dictionary (8th Ed.). Great pick, Debi!

Midstate College Paralegal Studies Legal Community Focus Group

by Denise Risinger

Attorneys and Paralegals, including CIPA Secretary, Denise Risinger, gathered by invitation to the Focus Group sponsored by Midstate College on Monday, October 26, 2015, at Sanzani's in Peoria. The purpose of the Legal Community Focus Group was to ensure that the Midstate College Paralegal Studies Program (ABA Approved) is meeting the current hiring standards for paralegals in Central Illinois. In addition to getting basic employment information from participating members of the legal community, this meeting focused on the core competencies/tasks for paralegals and technology utilized in the law office.

The following essential paralegal skills were discussed during the focus group meeting:

the ability to focus on a task; technology; discovery skills; document review and processing, file management, witness interviewing and customer care. According to Mark Wiltse, Director of Midstate's Legal Studies Department, all of the results have not been calculated because in addition to the focus group meeting, Midstate conducts



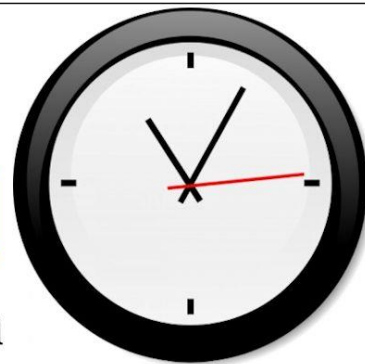
alumni and employer surveys that target the same information and these surveys are still being processed.

Promotion of the Paralegal profession was discussed as well as the terms "paralegals" and "legal assistants." It was noted during this discussion that these terms are used synonymously by the ABA, as well as many state legislatures, and national organizations. It was further noted that some companies do not use these terms interchangeably.

For further information about this Focus Group or for inquiries regarding Midstate College's Legal Studies Department, please contact **Mark Wiltse**, Director, Legal Studies Department at mwiltse@midstate.edu.

It's time to renew
your CIPA membership!

Visit www.ciparalegal.org to apply and pay your dues via Paypal



The Resume and Cover Letter

by Chris Thomas, ACP

A GOOD RESUME is extremely important in the process of searching for a job. Because firms and companies are flooded with resumes, your resume must get the attention of the hiring partner or Human Resources representative and create a great impression in less than a minute. Your resume is your sales pitch to a potential employer. The only way to get someone to hire you is to make your resume outstanding -- above those of your peers.

Your name, home address, phone number and email address should appear at the top of the resume. Use a traditional computer font such as 12-point Times New Roman; however, your name can be in a larger font and bolded. Keep the resume to one page if at all possible. As stated above, employers receive numerous resumes and therefore, may not read beyond the first page. You should include the following sections in your resume:

- Career objectives;
- Education;
- Experience;
- Skills; and
- Other Relevant Experience, if applicable.

Career Objectives:

This is your opportunity to grab an employer's attention. It is the first paragraph in which you provide your personal information, immediately informs the employer what your career goal is and encourages them to continue reading your resume. Your career objective should be a one sentence description of the job you are seeking. If you do not know the area of legal practice in which you want to specialize, focus your objective to a general practice of law. Examples: "To secure an entry-level position as a paralegal in a personal injury law firm," or "To secure a position in a law firm that can utilize a legal professional with outstanding research and writing skills."

Education:

If you are a new paralegal with limited or no work experience, this is the section you should focus on. Designate your degree or the paralegal certificate you completed, your major, and the college from which you graduated, and the date of your graduation.



List the courses that are pertinent to the job for which you are applying. Law firms typically seek potential employees who have skills in areas of legal research and writing, litigation and law office management.

You should also list your leadership and academic activities in this section. You should list membership in all student and academic organizations. Highlight your leadership positions and your respective duties and achievements while serving in those leadership roles.

Lastly, if you have received academic achievements such as being on the dean's list or graduating with honors, highlight those awards and honors in your resume.

Experience:

While you may have a minimal work history as a new paralegal, this section is the heart of your resume. There are other areas besides employment experience that can be categorized as experience. An internship is an excellent way to highlight your duties and responsibilities and the skills you acquired.

Skills:

This section focuses on special skills you possess that you may not have highlighted in other sections of the resume. These may include Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, or Westlaw.

Other Relevant Experience:

This last section is for other relevant experience that you may have but did not address in other sections of the resume. An example would be demonstration of leadership skills while serving in a civic or community activity.

COVER LETTER

Many make the mistake of thinking a cover letter is not necessary or important. However, many times employers do consider a cover letter before coming to a final decision in the hiring process. It is therefore very important to include an impressive cover letter with your resume. When writing your cover letter:

- Make sure your format is professional.
- The subject of your letter should reflect the name of the job applied for.
- Choose an appropriate salutation and closing line.
- Keep the letter short and simple.
- Be sure to transition your paragraphs. In the first paragraph introduce yourself and give a source of reference for the position. In the next paragraph you might reference the qualities which validate that you are the ideal candidate.
- Before you finalize your letter, be sure to proofread and thoroughly check for any errors.

The Immigration Project

by Debi Taylor, ACP

It feels good to give back. It just does. A wonderful organization that could use your help is the Immigration Project. They serve downstate Illinois with immigrant legal services. They offer a wide array of services and have clinics in Bloomington-Normal, Champaign, Kankakee, Peoria, and Springfield. Speaking a foreign language is not a requirement although if you do it is certainly a plus!

Please take a moment and look at their website. If you are feeling grateful, particularly at this time of year, and believe it is about time to do that pro bono work you have been putting off, please contact **Liz Eilts** at (309) 766-7763 or elizabeth.eilts.cj7q@statefarm.com. Liz has given generously of her time to this Project and would be happy to discuss the options of service to this Project with you.



To learn more about The Immigration Project or to make a donation, please visit the organization's website:

www.immigrationproject.org

“Flourish” Luncheon

by Nichole Byers

On November 11, 2015, The Immigration Project, based in Normal, held its “Flourish Where You’re Planted” luncheon at Second Presbyterian Church in Bloomington. The bureaucratic rules and procedures of immigration can be very daunting and The Immigration Project assists immigrating people in navigating the process.

The purpose of this lunch was two-fold: to celebrate their first “Immigration Hero,” Cristine Deutsch, and to help the organization raise funds.

The event kicked off with a compelling video presentation that told the stories of several local individuals and their families and their journey to United States citizenship.

The Immigration Hero Award was presented to Ms. Deutsch, who, after coming to the United States from Bolivia, has worked tirelessly as a social justice advocate for immigration populations.

Appellate Judge James Knecht was the keynote speaker for this event. Quoting both Abraham Lincoln and Carl Sandberg, he wrapped up the event by discussing hopes and dreams, sorrows and prevails, and understanding the hardships of real people.

*Happy
Holidays*
from your friends at
CIPA



NALA News and Events

Compiled by Debi Taylor, ACP

NALA Campus LIVE!

In real estate it is location, location, location. For paralegals, it is education, education, education! The profession of law is ever changing and we must keep up with it. We have a professional responsibility for the advocacy of the client to respond to challenging obstacles such as, for example, technology and communication issues.

Luckily for us, NALA offers on-line continuing legal education. Live web seminars are offered in two sessions each year, February-May and August-December. Each session features about 30 on-line seminars. The level of instruction varies. NALA tries to offer programs for novice to advanced level paralegals. Each seminar is repeated within one year and more often, based on demand. Some of the sessions are recorded for those unable to participate in the live program. Registration fees are \$80 per course for NALA members and \$105 for non-members. Fees vary for courses presented in two parts. The courses are offered CST and over the lunch hour. The audio portion of the presentation is conducted via telephone conference call and it is a toll free call.

Following are the offerings for December 2015 should you be interested in a course. Take one for your own personal growth. Utilize this as a prime opportunity to show your employer that you are aware of the importance of continuing education. Whatever the reason...enroll in a course!

State and Federal Administrative Law

Rebecca E. Patty, JD
Tuesday, December 1

Electronic Discovery: Best Practices for Small to Midsize Firms and Companies

Shazzie Naseem
Wednesday, December 2

Time Management Techniques and Strategies

Vicki Voisin, ACP
Thursday, December 3

Written Communications

Virginia Koerselman Newman, Attorney
Friday, December 4

Superfund: Past, Present and is there a Future?

Rebecca E. Patty, JD
Monday, December 7

Basic Business Organizations

Kelly A. LaGrave, ACP
Tuesday, December 8

Resume and Interviewing Tips for Paralegals

Allison T. Alexis, ACP
Wednesday, December 9

Landlord Tenant Law

Laura T. Eubank, Attorney
Thursday, December 10

Basic Torts

Darleen T. Dozier, ACP
Friday, December 11

Family Law: Learning how not to do it like the celebrities

Laura T. Eubank, Attorney
Monday, December 14

Criminal Law: What you say on Facebook may hurt you

Laura T. Eubank, Attorney
Tuesday, December 15

Judgment and Legal Analysis

Virginia Koerselman Newman, Attorney
Thursday, December 17

Willing to Relocate?

NALA has a link on their website of current paralegal job openings. You need not be a member of NALA to access it.

<http://www.nala.org/bb/index.php?/forum/12-employment-opportunities/>

The positions are located throughout the country and vary from little experience required to a specific area of expertise mandatory.

Just a reminder to check the NALA website for this beneficial description of job possibilities.

NALA Annual Convention

It's never too soon to start planning to attend the 2016 NALA Annual Convention.

The dates are July 13 - 15 in sunny Las Vegas!

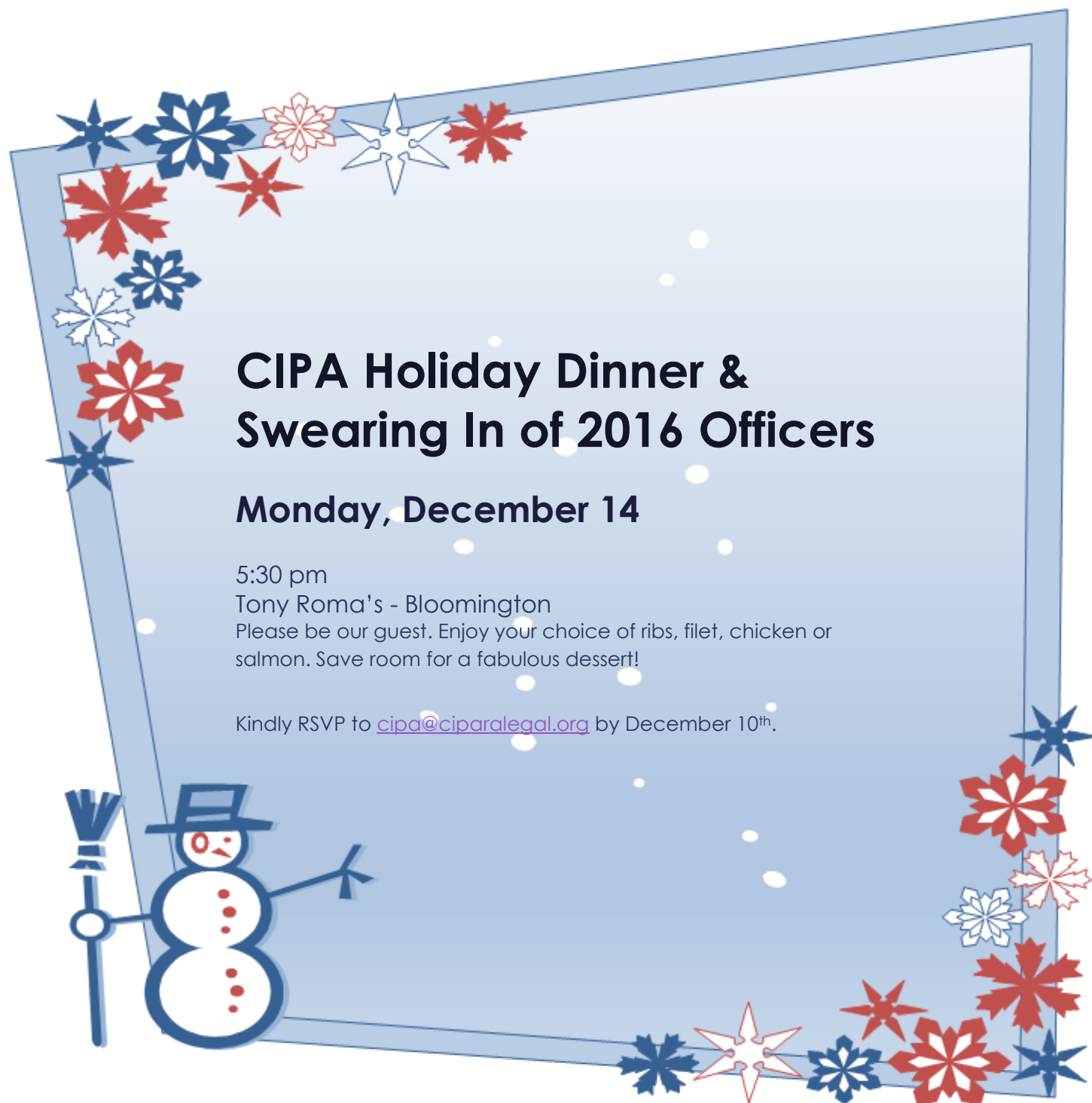
For further information contact CIPA's NALA Liaison Debi Taylor at debi.taylor.qntn@statefarm.com or visit NALA online at <http://www.nala.org/>.



Keep up with CIPA news, updates, and events by liking and following our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/ciparalegal



Central Illinois
Paralegal Association



CIPA Holiday Dinner & Swearing In of 2016 Officers

Monday, December 14

5:30 pm
Tony Roma's - Bloomington
Please be our guest. Enjoy your choice of ribs, filet, chicken or salmon. Save room for a fabulous dessert!

Kindly RSVP to cipa@ciparalegal.org by December 10th.

CIPA Connection is compiled and edited by Denise Risinger and Nichole Byers, Co-Chairs of CIPA's Newsletter Committee, and relies heavily on content submitted by members. To contribute news, articles, photographs, or other material for the newsletter, please e-mail cipa@ciparalegal.org and reference "CIPA Newsletter" in the subject line.

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